

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-11 are pending in this application.

Applicants thank Examiners Gurzo and Lee for conducting a personal interview on December 3, 2003 with Applicants' representatives, during which claim 1 and the Bisschops et al. reference (EP 1052551 A2) were discussed. The substance of the interview is captured in the remarks that follow.

In the Office Action dated October 27, 2003, Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Bisschops et al. (EP 1052551 A2). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that a European Patent Application cannot qualify as a 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) reference because § 102(e) specifically requires the reference to be "a patent granted on an application for patent by another in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c)...." For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants have attached hereto the corresponding U.S. Patent (No. 6,445,440) granted to Bisschops et al.

Bisschops et al. is directed to solving the problem of working with movable components in the high vacuum environment that is required in extreme ultra-violet (EUV) radiation systems. (Bisschops et al. (EP) at [0005] – [0007].) Bisschops et al. solves this problem by providing a sliding seal that provides for an improved motion feed-through to allow control of an object placed within the vacuum chamber. (Bisschops et al. (EP) at [0008] – [0010].)

In contrast, Applicants' application is directed to solving the problem of providing conduits containing utilities to a movable component in a vacuum chamber without contaminating the vacuum chamber. (Specification at [0015] – [0016].) Such a problem exists because it is difficult to provide a conduit shield that is airtight, yet flexible enough to allow for movement of the component. (Specification at [0016].) Applicants have found that the problem may be solved by providing conduits in a space, within a conduit shield, that is held at a vacuum generated by a second vacuum generator. This way, if the conduit shield is not airtight, any contamination caused by outgassing of the conduits will be contained within the conduit shield and will not leak into the main vacuum chamber, as long as the vacuums are maintained at proper relative pressures. (Specification at [0016] – [0017].)

Therefore, Claim 1 recites a lithographic projection apparatus that includes, *inter alia*, at least one conduit communicating a utility, a conduit shield substantially enclosing a space comprising the at least one conduit and substantially separating the vacuum chamber from the space comprising the at least one conduit, and a second vacuum generator constructed and arranged to provide a vacuum in the space comprising the at least one conduit. In contrast, Bisschops et al. does not disclose all of these features. In Bisschops et al., element 13 is not a conduit; element 13 is a pillar that supports the fine stage, or short stroke wafer support chuck 14. (Bisschops et al. (EP) at paragraph [0024]). Also, element 12 is not a conduit shield; element 12 is a sliding seal that separates the vacuum chamber (V) from the motor compartment (M) by sealing the aperture. (Bisschops et al. (EP) at paragraphs [0024] – [0027]). Thus, element 12 does not substantially enclose a space comprising the at least one conduit. Even assuming, *arguendo*, that element 20 may be construed to be a conduit and element 13 may be construed to be a conduit shield, Bisschops et al. does not disclose a second vacuum generator that is constructed and arranged to provide a vacuum in the space comprising the at least one conduit.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and the claims the depend from claim 1, are patentable over Bisschops et al. and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 3 depends from claim 2, which depends from claim 1, and adds the additional feature of the conduit shield comprising a conduit conduct that has at least two joints. Nowhere does Bisschops et al. disclose a conduit conduct that has at least two joints. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is patentable over Bisschops et al. for at least this additional reason.

Claim 7 depends from claim 3 and adds the additional feature of moving co-operating surfaces of the joints that are furnished with vacuum seals. Nowhere does Bisschops et al. disclose moving co-operating surfaces of the joints that are furnished with vacuum seals. Application respectfully submit that claim 7 is patentable over Bisschops et al. for at least this additional reason.

Claim 9 recites a device manufacturing method using a lithographic apparatus that includes, *inter alia*, providing a utility through a conduit, shielding a vacuum in the vacuum chamber from the conduit with a conduit shield, and providing a second vacuum in a space comprising the conduit and separated by the conduit shield from the vacuum chamber. Bisschops et al. does not disclose providing a second vacuum in a space comprising the conduit and separated by the conduit shield from the vacuum chamber. Accordingly,

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 9, and claim 10 which depends from claim 9, are patentable over Bisschops et al. and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

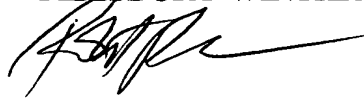
Claim 11 recites a lithographic projection apparatus that includes, *inter alia*, a conduit communicating a utility, a second vacuum region within which the conduit is disposed, and a conduit shield separating the second vacuum region from the first vacuum region. Bisschops et al. does not disclose a second vacuum region within which the conduit is disposed, and a conduit shield separating the second vacuum region from the first vacuum region. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 is patentable over Bisschops et al. and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

All rejections and objections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: United States Patent No. 6,445,440 B1